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PSYCHOLOGY—EAST AND WEST

FOR several generations, at least, Western travelers to Eastern lands have been at odds with what they regarded as Eastern passivity and pessimism. Eastern indifference to suffering is a subject on which hundreds of writers have waxed eloquent, and the failure, until recently, of Eastern leaders to show a proper respect for Western achievements in science and industry has created a virtual "tradition" of criticism of the East.

Especially in religious philosophy have such judgments been made. The Hindu ideal of Nirvana has been mistakenly identified with "nothingness" or simple extinction, and the Buddhist longing for dispassion has been made to seem the antithesis of the West's "let-us-be-up-and-doing" philosophy. During the past five or ten years, however, a new attitude toward Eastern thought has been shaping in the West. A better acquaintance with the philosophical literature of the East has doubtless played a part in this change, as well as the chastening influence of the multiple disasters that have overtaken the "progressive" civilizations of Europe and America.

Our purpose, here, is to make a brief examination of this change. It can hardly be a serious comparison of Eastern and Western psychology—as our title might imply—but will rather attempt to understand such leading conceptions as the idea of the "self" and the idea of "achievement" as they appear in Eastern and Western thought.

At the outset, it will be well to have a fair statement of the differences in these outlooks, as they have appeared to the best of Western investigators. For this we choose a passage from G. Lowes Dickinson's *Appearances*, in which the English scholar records his reflections while contemplating the figure of a Buddha at Borobudur in Java. Thoughts of Buddha's "theory of human life, its value and purpose" filled his mind:

For a long time I was silent, meditating his doctrine. Then I spoke of children, and he said, "They grow old." I spoke of strong men, and he said, "They grow weak." I spoke of their work and achievement, and he said, "They die." The stars came out, and I spoke of the eternal law. He said, "One law concerns you—that which binds you to the wheel of life." The moon rose, and I spoke of beauty. He said, "There is one beauty—that of a soul redeemed from desire." Thereupon the West stirred in me, and cried "No!" "Desire," it said, "is the heart and essence of the world. It needs not and craves not extinction. It needs and craves perfection. Youth passes; strength passes; life passes. Yes! What of it? We have access to the youth, the strength, the life of the world.

Man is born to sorrow. Yes! But he feels it as tragedy and redeems it. Not 'round life, not outside life, but through life is the way. Desire more and more intense, because more and more pure; not peace, but the plenitude of experience. Your foundation was false. You thought man wanted rest. He does not. We at least do not, we of the West. We want more labour; we want more stress; we want more passion. Pain we accept, for it stings us into life. Strife we accept, for it hardens us to strength. We believe in action; we believe in desire. And we believe that by them we shall attain."

So the West broke out in me; and I looked at him to see if he was moved. But the calm eye was untroubled, unruffled the majestic brow, unperplexed the sweet solemn mouth. Secure in his Nirvana, he heard or heard me not. He had attained the life-in-death he sought. But I, I had not attained the life in life. Unhelped by him, I must go my way. The East, perhaps, he had understood. He had not understood the West.

To give Dickinson his full due, we know of no fairer attempt to state the issue. Moreover, there is the profound presence of the genius of the West in what he says. If compassion and contemplative peace characterize the East, the surge of Promethean struggle typifies the West. But the East was old, even in Buddha's time, while the West is young, even in our own. The need is not to decide that the East and the West are nonetheless the "same," but to discover whether the wisdom of the East belongs also, in a special sense, to the West, and vice versa. After all, the East is today energetically learning from the West—is, alas, in some measure being "infected" by the West; and there is evidence that this is also a mutual learning as well as a mutual infection.

The West, perhaps, knows much of the vulnerability of Eastern wisdom, but what does it know, really, of the things in which Eastern wisdom is strong?

The monuments of the West reveal the dreams of the Westerner's heart. We think of Columbus peering into the mists of silent seas; Washington crossing the Delaware; the pioneers lumbering over the prairies—the ideal of the West is a visage set with determination. We have dug, scarred and gouged the face of the earth, thrown graceful arches across torrents and now wonder if we can hang permanent floats for aircraft in the sky. This mastery of the particular obstacle is a routine operation with us. Our children become mechanics in their teens, pilots in late adolescence. We go to school for particular skills and disciplines. The trained man is the man of promise, who will succeed. We have "techniques" for satisfying endless de-

sires, and more techniques for arousing new desires for our technicians to satisfy. We lust—or claim to lust—for competition. Our ideologists endorse the virtues of the struggle for life, for eminence before one another. We eye our school teachers suspiciously if they say a belittling word about competition. Zest for life, for beating nature into whatever image takes our fancy—that is our career.

But if passivity has been the disaster of the East, anxiety is the avenging angel of the West. What if we should fail, be crowded out by more skillful competitors? What if the system breaks down, if there is not enough "success" to go around? Life in the West is changing, these days. Achievement of nearly every sort has become impersonal, technical, and properly supervised. The great drive to satisfy desire has been taken in hand by bureaucrats. To make the things we want *sure*, we regulate and ration them in equalitarian portions, and we mass produce them on a scale that brings an insipid uniformity. And because we know somewhere inside us that the system is not operating very well, and that we can find no work at all outside the system, we have developed the need for new techniques to hide our failure from ourselves. Our slick magazines bring pseudo-culture to the masses. The self-help books offer homespun philosophies of "adjustment." Liquor, sleeping tablets, peace-of-mind religion, a withdrawal in mental illness—these are all acceptable escapes from the insidious sense of failure, the brand of a guilt which we cannot explain.

This is the heyday of neo-orthodoxy in religion—of the dusting off and revival of the concept of sin. Why is a man filled with anxiety? There is a simple answer. He has tried to deny the mark of the Original Sin. Let him admit his failure, his incapacity for self-reliant life, and he can wear the robe of failure with the dignity of a man who was marked with failure from the beginning. To be guilty from the act of Creation is to be personally guiltless. *He* didn't fail; he was always that way. This is one kind of adjustment to anxiety—to admit that guilt is God's will and let the burden fall away.

The East has another solution. What, asks the philosopher of serenity, are you trying to prove? That you are a man? But this is admitted. That you are *more* of a man than other men? Why is this important? Are you sure it is true? If it is not true, then you are a "nothing"? This may be, but have you thought that being nothing may be very close to being everything?

Buddhist philosophy invites a fresh examination of the passion for self-assertion. What is left for Western man if he relinquishes the drive of self-assertion? Will he have anything left to live for?

It is at this point that we find ourselves intellectually helpless without a metaphysical conception of the self, if only as a reference point for further deliberations. If the self, as David Hume insisted, is "nothing but a bundle of perceptions which succeed each other with inconceivable rapidity, and which are in a perpetual flux and movement," then the hunger for self-assertion is likely to be an uncontrollable drive that will never let loose of us and can never be wholly satisfied. Likewise, if we agree with John Dewey that

We arrive at true conceptions of motivation and interest only by the recognition that selfhood (except as it has encased itself in a shell of routine) is in process of making, and that any self is capable of including within itself a number of inconsistent selves, of unharmonized dispositions.

But if we allow, as Eastern philosophers and certain Western thinkers have proposed, that the self is capable of detachment from the activities of the personality, then we have, at least in theory, a *choice* regarding the anxious demand for self-assertion. We can argue to ourselves that a life without self-assertion, even if not desirable, according to our present standards, is nevertheless a possibility. This opens the door to an entirely new attitude toward life.

Before attempting to get at the meaning of this attitude, something should be said about the more familiar means of controlling the excesses and anti-social aspects of self-assertion—namely, the virtues. Society has two means of exercising control over human behavior, law and religion. The law provides an external limit to acts of egotism and selfishness. Religion proposes self-restraint, offering the reward of heavenly blessings or a fortunate rebirth to those who curb their behavior and perform the duties of the pious. These forms of control are as well-known in the West as in the East, but are commonly thought by Westerners to exhaust the resources for realizing the ends of life. Eastern philosophy, however, goes a step further, in proposing a radically different view of the human situation. (But it is not, really, an exclusively "Eastern" view, any more, although the classical accounts of this attitude are preponderantly Oriental.)

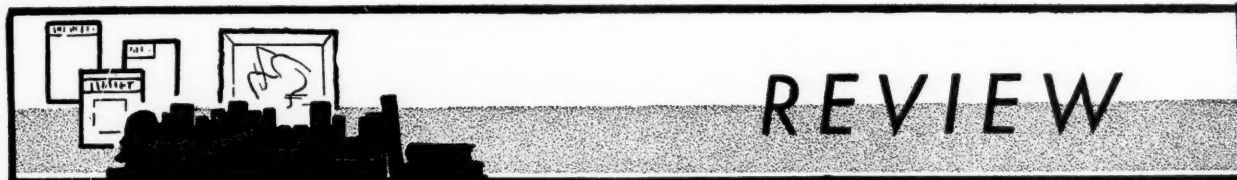
The fundamental conception of this view is the idea of the self as a center of awareness—and *nothing else*. The forms of awareness or channels of perception are acquisitions growing out of experience; they change, gain wider scope and increased radius, but they are not the self. The self is postulated as simple consciousness, and as essentially one with all other selves. How, then, shall we account for the sense of individuality? This is a difficult question, which, for Western minds, is probably best dealt with by Leibniz in his philosophy of the monads. We quote from Theodore Merz a passage which suggests how Leibniz could conceive in mathematical imagery of a point or center of consciousness which has both particular and infinite reality:

As a cone stands on its point, or a perpendicular straight line cuts a horizontal plane only in one mathematical point, but may extend infinitely in height and depth, so the essences of *things real* have only a punctual existence in this physical world of space; but have an infinite depth of inner life in the metaphysical world of thought.

Psychologically speaking, from this point of view, the self is the witness of life's processes, but remains unaffected by them. It is this self which follows from the pantheist conception of life, and which makes possible all the forms of the Eastern philosophy of "non-attachment." This is clearly expressed in the thirteenth discourse of the *Bhagavad-Gita*:

He who seeth that all his actions are performed by nature only, and that the self within is not the actor, sees indeed. And when he realizes perfectly that all things whatsoever in nature are comprehended in the One, he attains to the Su-

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ANOTHER "WORLD PERSPECTIVE"

IN reviewing Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan's *Recovery of Faith* (MANAS, February 15), we became acquainted with the intentions of the editorial board of the "World Perspectives" series. The plan of this series is "to bring to the public short books in a variety of fields by the most distinctive of contemporary thinkers and world leaders." The prospectus generalizes further: "The purpose is to reveal basic new trends in modern civilization, integrate the creative forces at work today in religion, politics, the arts and sciences, and to contribute to a degree understanding of the inter-relations of man and the universe, the individual and society and of the values shared by all people. . . . World Perspectives represents and presents a world community of ideas. This Series emphasizes the principle of unity in mankind and permanence within change." Editor of the series—of which seven volumes have already appeared—is Dr. Ruth Nanda Anshen, who has also served in a similar capacity in the Science of Culture series. The latest volume of World Perspectives is Lewis Mumford's *The Transformations of Man*, and from Dr. Anshen's introduction it is quite apparent that the editor shares many of Mumford's views.

Reviewers often discover that the closing pages of a serious book provide the most quotable material, and this is true of *The Transformations of Man*. Mr. Mumford, in the space of 250 small and easy-to-read pages, describes the transitions between various historic world-views, concluding with the proposal that a "One-World" man can represent the next stage in development. The religions which have alienated man from faith in himself will give way to an entirely new view of religion, both ancient and modern symbolisms affording evidence of the individual human's creative and transcendent powers. The One-World man will no longer be factional or partisan in either philosophy or politics. But he will have something in common with the "ruggedly individual" mystics—and with poets and scholars. In short, he will have a broader and more patient mind than those of his predecessors who tended to cling to conventional ideas of ethical value and to doctrinal correctness. Mumford writes:

In his very completeness, One World man will seem ideologically and culturally naked, almost unidentifiable. He will be like the Jain saints of old, "clothed in space," his nakedness a sign that he does not belong exclusively to any nation, group, trade, sect, school, or community. He who has reached the level of world culture will be at home in any part of that culture: in its inner world no less than its outer world. Everything that he does or feels or makes will bear the imprint of the larger self he has made his own. Each person, no matter how poorly endowed or how humble, is eligible to take part in this effort, and indeed is indispensable; yet no matter how great any individual's talents may be, the results will always be incomplete; for the equilibrium we seek is a dynamic one and the balance we promote is not an end in itself but a

means to further growth. It is provided in the essence of things as Walt Whitman said, "that from any fruition of success, no matter what, shall come forth something to make a greater struggle necessary."

Following are the last two paragraphs of *The Transformations of Man*:

So we stand on the brink of a new age: the age of an open world and a self capable of playing its part in that larger sphere. An age of renewal, when work and leisure and learning and love will unite to produce a fresh form for every stage of life, and a higher trajectory for life as a whole. Archaic man, civilized man, axial man, mechanized man, achieved only a partial development of human potentialities; and though much of their work is still viable and useful as a basis for man's further development, no mere quarrying of stones from their now-dilapidated structures will provide material for building the fabric of world culture. No less important than the past forces that drive men on are the new forms, dimly emerging in man's unconscious, that begin to beckon him and hold before him the promise of creativity; a life that will not be at the mercy of chance or fettered to irrelevant necessities. He will begin to shape his whole existence in the forms of love as he once only shaped the shadowy figments of his imagination—though, under the compulsions of his post-historic nihilism he now hardly dares thus to shape even purely aesthetic objects. But soon perhaps the dismembered bones will again knit together, clothed in flesh.

In carrying man's self-transformation to this further stage, world culture may bring about a fresh release of spiritual energy that will unveil new potentialities, no more visible in the human self today than radium was in the physical world a century ago, though always present. Even on its lowest terms, world culture will weld the nations and tribes together in a more meaningful network of relations and purposes. But unified man himself is no terminal point. For who can set bounds to man's emergence or to his power of surpassing his provisional achievements? So far we have found no limits to the imagination nor yet to the sources on which it may draw. Every goal man reaches provides a new starting point, and the sum of all man's days is just a beginning.

Mumford's philosophy is founded on the Greek concept of education—embodied in the term *paideia*: "Paideia is education looked upon as a lifelong transformation of the human personality, in which every aspect of life plays a part. Unlike education in the traditional sense, *paideia* does not limit itself to the conscious learning processes, or to inducting the young into the social heritage of the community. *Paideia* is rather the task of giving form to the act of living itself: treating every occasion of life as a means of self-fabrication, and as part of a larger process of converting facts into values, processes into purposes, hopes and plans into consummations and realizations. *Paideia* is not merely a learning; it is making and a shaping; and man himself is the work of art that *paideia* seeks to form and to perfect.

"We are too easily tempted today, by habits that belong to past moments of civilization, into thinking of the kind of unity that might be achieved by a formal assembly of

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DECEPTIONS OF INTELLECTUALITY

WE find two things troubling about this week's leading article. First, the article seems to make the release from anxiety sound "easy," as though it might be accomplished by a bit of metaphysical legerdemain. Nothing could be further from the truth. The processes of re-education of basic human attitudes involve the change of long-established involuntary responses of feeling, which is a very different matter from adopting new intellectual opinions.

That human aspiration and intellectual reorientation outrun by far the capacity of the psyche to follow their lead—that, in fact, the psyche always resists change as a kind of "death," is the source of the Promethean agony in human life. About the only help we can have in enduring this pain is in the idea that the pain is "natural"—that it belongs with the struggle of human beings to find a freedom which neither terrifies nor leads to new enslavements. We can bear a pain that does not accuse us of guilt and failure, but marks the endeavor to reach a higher plateau of motivation and action. This was the supreme consolation of Prometheus—

A god . . . in fetters, anguish fraught;
 The foe of Zeus, in hatred held by all . . .
 For that to men he bare too fond a mind. . .

The other dissatisfaction we feel with the lead article is in its possible implication that the discipline of Zen psychology may hold the entire secret of liberation. As we see it, the teachings of Zen are artifacts of ancient wisdom. They can serve modern man only by undergoing some sort of transformation formula which signifies the rediscovery of what truth Zen embodies, but in the context of the present. We cannot merely "revive" the insights of self-realization which were born in another age. They may serve as evidence that self-realization is possible, but every age must gain its own leverage for the great task.

We stand, today, as in a gallery of ancient glories—the harmony of primitive societies fascinates us, just as Tolstoy was fascinated by the Russian peasants, and we marvel at the subtleties of the psychological lore of long ago. But this wisdom is not our own. It seems that all we can learn from the past is that such wisdom is possible for man. We can possess it only by creating it for ourselves.

REVIEW—(Continued)

specialists, by an organization of 'inter-disciplinary activities,' by an intellectual synthesis based upon some logical scheme for uniting the sciences. But *paideia* demands far more than that kind of formal synthesis: the unity it seeks must be sought in experience, and it demands a readiness to interchange roles, even at a sacrifice of experiences, for the sake of the greater gain to learning and life. The lesson of *paideia* is fundamentally the prime lesson of democracy: growth and self-transformation cannot be delegated. What is more, the achievement of the human whole—and the achievement of the wholly human—take precedence over every specialized activity, over every narrower purpose."

Mr. Mumford is at home when examining the effects of major political and economic transitions on ethics, and he recognizes that, in our present time, "almost every government has been forced—covertly or openly—to accept the standard of human welfare as superior to the rights of property, when they are in conflict, not merely in emergencies but in everyday concerns." In other words, Mumford's "One World" man is not an imaginary person, but an inevitable evolutionary stage in the progress of the human race toward full self-consciousness.

Here we encounter a definition of the total personality structure reminiscent of the thinking of Karen Horney and Erich Fromm. Mumford feels every human being is capable of "rebirth"—that is, a final reaching of the impersonal, judicial perspective—typified by the mystics of the past and by present-day idealists representative of the "scientific method." There are, in short, three "selves":

One is born *with* the first self, the biological substratum or id: one is born *into* the second self, the social self, which makes the animal over into a modified human image, and directs its purely animal propensities into useful social channels, carved by a particular group. But one must be reborn if one is to achieve the third self. In that rebirth, the latest part of the self, assuming leadership, projects a destination that neither man's animal nature nor his social achievements have so far more than faintly indicated. In this detachment lies the promise of further growth.

In closing any review of a "World Perspectives" book, one can hardly neglect the philosophical correlations between the quality of the published material itself and Dr. (Turn to page 8)

MANAS is a journal of independent inquiry, concerned with study of the principles which move world society on its present course, and with search for contrasting principles — that may be capable of supporting intelligent idealism under the conditions of life in the twentieth century. **MANAS** is concerned, therefore, with philosophy and with practical psychology, in as direct and simple a manner as its editors and contributors can write. The word "manas" comes from a common root suggesting "man" or "the thinker." Editorial articles are unsigned, since **MANAS** wishes to present ideas and viewpoints, not personalities.

The Publishers

CHILDREN ... and Ourselves

[Guest editor who contributes "Children . . . and Ourselves" for this week is Mr. F. G. Pearce, headmaster of the Rishi Valley School, of Andhra, South India. We print Mr. Pearce's discussion with both interest and pleasure, confident that readers will share our feeling that here is evidence indeed that we live in "One World," united by common ideals and hopes for the future.]

THE late Albert Einstein expressed his opinion on education in the following unequivocal terms:

To me the worst thing seems to be for a school principally to work with methods of fear, force and artificial authority. Such treatment destroys the sound sentiments, the sincerity, and the self-confidence of the pupil. It produces the submissive subject. . . . Give into the power of the teacher the fewest possible coercive measures, so that the only source of the pupil's respect for the teacher is the human and intellectual quality of the latter.

India's Vice-President, Dr. Radhakrishnan, addressing the All-India Writers' Conference a year or two ago, said:

Of all the emotions, the least compatible with freedom and the most degrading to man is *Fear*. We are planting appalling fear in men's hearts. By so doing, we corrupt their morals and destroy their minds.

It is hardly necessary to say that Mahatma Gandhi held similar views.

Yet, in spite of all these pronouncements of great men, and in spite of the evidence of our own eyes that fear is one of the most demoralizing influences in the world today, most parents and teachers still accept the use of fear in education, and, even if they do not justify it (as many do), they take no steps to eliminate it.

It seems obvious that, as we are educating in the schools of today the parents of tomorrow, *it is in the schools that we must make a beginning of the eradication of fear*. Those brought up on fear almost inevitably tend to accept fear as the obvious instrument for solving life's problems. The present condition of the world is the result. But it is reasonable to hope that if children are brought up to think and act with intelligence, motivated not simply by fear of consequences, or by desire for reward in some shape or form, they may adopt wiser methods in the upbringing of their own offspring, with the result that a more peaceful civilization may emerge in course of time. Otherwise, there seems but little chance of it.

The difficulty, of course, is to make a beginning. Especially in a country like the new India, in which all efforts are bent on producing *quick results on a vast scale*, the last thing which parents, teachers, and the powers-that-be will regard with approval is an effort to *produce revolutionary results by a long and intensive process demanding endless patience*. But if Dr. Einstein, Mahatma Gandhi and others are right, *there is no other way*, and we must set out boldly along the path indicated by them. To continue in the present direction, encouraging or justifying the use of fear in education, is to *help the drift of the world to destruction*, going on day by day before our very eyes.

To create a school in which the use of fear is avoided, thoughtfully, conscientiously, and to the greatest possible extent, is no easy task. For, when one examines carefully the principles and methods on which most schools of our time are run—even those which call themselves "progressive" schools—it is soon evident that a large number of the practices commonly accepted by teachers and parents (and even by educationists) as normal and wholly justified, are at bottom based on the exercise of fear.

The elimination of fear does not mean simply the avoidance of corporal punishment, or even the avoidance of punishment of every kind. A sensitive child fears ridicule and harsh criticism even more than it fears a slap of the hand. Fear of being scolded for not standing high in the class is quite as real as fear of being kept in after school to do extra work. It is impossible to lay down a code which the teacher and the parent must follow in order to avoid creating fear in the child. It is equally impossible to make rules for helping a child to develop through love, the opposite of fear. That is why the creation of a school of this type needs *teachers of a very exceptional kind*. They must possess, above all, *real love of children*—for, if *that* is present, all other qualifications can be acquired. Academic knowledge is of course necessary, if one wants to help children at the High School level; and the usually accepted criterion of academic knowledge is a University degree, though even that is not a *sine qua non* if there is the desire to learn in order to teach. The possession of a teaching degree or diploma may be, for such work, either a disqualification or an added advantage, depending entirely upon the attitude of the possessor. If its possessor believes (as many young trained teachers seem to believe) that skill in the technique of class-teaching alone makes a good teacher, it would be better to be untrained and to find out how to meet the children's needs through the desire to help them. Too great a reliance upon the technique of teaching can sap initiative in a teacher just as excessive mechanization can destroy self-reliance and creativeness in a wider sphere.

Perhaps the greatest difficulty in the way of creating this new kind of school in our own era is that *it cannot be done on a mass scale*. The present age is an age of mass-production. When applied to human beings, this means regimentation. *You can regiment human beings into servility, but you cannot regiment them into freedom*. To educate human beings to understand freedom and to use it wisely, *they must be dealt with as individuals*, not as machines. Education in freedom cannot be given on a mass scale: it must be given personally, intensively, with understanding and love. To do that, *the new type of school must be a small school, a homely school*.

Small and homely schools do not usually commend themselves to official planners who want to do everything on a vast scale and to produce visible results quickly. Consequently, those who feel that it is important to educate without fear have to be prepared to work without official encouragement or aid, and to face many difficulties.

A serious attempt to create a school of this kind was made in India in 1950 under the auspices of a secular educational body, The Foundation for New Education. The school, known as the Rishi Valley School, is situated in
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FRONTIERS

RELIGION

SCIENCE

EDUCATION

"Spiritual Dilemmas"

A BBC Third Programme talk on "Religion in America," by Norman Birnbaum, contains some notable comments. While Mr. Birnbaum is largely concerned with reporting on Will Herberg's latest book, *Protestant, Catholic, Jew*, and agreeing with this author that the current "religious revival" in the United States is suspect on a number of counts, the BBC speaker asks questions of his own. Toward the end of his talk (which was printed in a recent *Listener*), he says:

Religion has been a conspicuously powerful force in American cultural history. But a deeper problem remains: is a genuine cultural revival of religion possible in a highly advanced industrial culture? Americans do not lack spiritual depth because of some innate quirk. They lack spiritual experience because they live in a society which demands relentless and unceasing external activity, a demand which, paradoxically, is a residue of America's Calvinist past. The typical American today is, in fact, a Calvinist with neither fear of hell nor hope of heaven. If the things of this world have crowded the things of the spirit out of the American consciousness, this is the result of the operation of an economic machine which must induce new sensations and new wants in its operators all the time, if it is not to run down. Little wonder that the humans themselves become a bit like machines.

Doubtless this is far too simple an account of the "spiritual" troubles of Americans, yet we may thank Mr. Birnbaum for raising some large issues. It is a fair question to ask what sort of religion, if any, is possible "in a highly advanced industrial culture." And it may be even better to ask if the real values of religion will not emerge more effectively in forms of activity which do not resemble conventional religion at all.

Here, perhaps, is the main trouble with "sociological" studies of religion. Religion tends to be identified almost entirely with people who think they are religious—who pursue the patterns which typify religious orthodoxy. It is a grave question whether religious orthodoxy is of any greater value than any other orthodoxy or system of conformity. Actually, sociological accounts of religion may do a distinct disservice by seeming to validate the claims of orthodoxy to "represent" religion, and making it appear that "science" now recognizes the true home and source of religion.

Religion, Mr. Birnbaum hints, is either difficult or impossible for Americans because they are so busy running from one thing to another. The economic struggle, the competition for status, the yearning for reassurance—these are the imperial forces in the psychic life of the American, so what room is left for religion?

But there may be other reasons of the irreligion of Americans. First of all, Americans, have created the first great non-traditional society on the face of the earth. We have, of course, the relics of many traditions mixed up with our

lives. We indulge dozens of borrowed conventions, and nowhere, probably, except in England, does a British coronation or a royal wedding obtain such complete coverage in the press as in America. But America neither stands nor falls by any single tradition. America is rather trying to make itself into a rational society, and while it has had the vast energy which flows from release from tradition, it suffers, also, from the confusions so terrible a freedom imposes.

Religion, on the other hand, is of the essence of the traditional. If there can be a rational religion, Americans have not discovered it, so that the religion which Americans find acceptable is rather a denatured form of traditional religion, which Mr. Birnbaum appropriately labels a "vacuous creed."

Humanism and Unitarianism are America's best effort in the direction of rational religion, but these are really forms of Naturalism, to which an infusion of altruism and humanitarianism has been deliberately added. They are not world philosophies of meaning which actually take the place of traditional religion, although they are certainly brave attempts.

Walt Whitman, we think, and Ralph Waldo Emerson, came the closest to having a religion for Americans that fills the bill. But who can or wants to be a second-hand Whitman or Emerson? This is precisely the point. Traditional religion is of necessity second-hand religion, so that, in a non-traditional society, each man must make his own! If you say that this is too much for the common man, we can only reply that anything else is too little for him.

The real source of our technological civilization is the abstractions of mathematics—the impersonal foundations of physics and engineering. To have the same reality, religion for America must involve at least an equal discipline of the mind. This means religious or philosophical thought upon which *effort* is expended. It seems incredible that so practical a people as the Americans could be deceived into thinking that religion, which is supposed to represent the highest values, can be "easy," a matter of mere "belief," or "faith," when everything else in life involves large amounts of hard work.

Mr. Birnbaum calls us a nation of Calvinists. Well, the Calvinists were at least *thinkers*, even if they were bad thinkers. They worked at their convictions. A try at understanding Jonathan Edwards might be a chastening experience for the "peace-of-mind" advocates. The Calvinists sought to develop a religion that would make sense, and if they ended with doctrines that seem to us monstrous, the fault was with their insupportable premises rather than with their logic.

This is a time when we should renew the attempt at rational religion, in the light of premises our wider educa-

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(Continued)

preme Spirit. This Supreme Spirit, O son of Kunti, even when it is in the body, neither acteth nor is it affected by action, because, being without beginning and devoid of attributes, it is changeless. As the all-moving Akasa by reason of its subtlety passeth everywhere unaffected, so the Spirit, though present in every kind of body, is not attached to action nor affected. As a single sun illuminateth the whole world, even so doth the One Spirit illumine every body.

It is in the moments of ultimate freedom, when a sense of the all-pervasiveness of the One takes possession of the mind and the feelings, that human beings gain perception of selfhood of this character. It is then that philosophic resignation is born, and a deep compassion for the whole of life. Realizing this sense of self, a man is no longer harried and pursued by the Furies of ambition, nor does fear that he will lose his identity press him onto endless self-assertion. Not even the virtues, as personal acquisitions, hold any glamor for him, for nothing can be added to the self, as perceiver, that it does not already possess.

tion and our deepening experiences permit us to hold, instead of seeking the hide-outs of emotional reassurance.

Fundamental to rational religion are the starting points of basic assumption. What view of the self should we begin with? What are the sources of conviction or opinion about the self? If we begin with the primitive feeling of identity, what modifications of this feeling should be accepted from science? From metaphysics? From the pioneer thinking of psychotherapy? In the latter case, for example, we know that the man who has a low opinion of himself is bound to have a low opinion of other people, and will probably suspect them of evil intent. What, then, would be a "high" opinion of oneself?

Much as we may dislike the idea of "metaphysics," an ennobling idea of the self is hardly possible without it. Science is practically silent on the subject, while religion has been responsible for the "miserable sinner" psychology which has little in common with attitudes of self-respect. Once a man forms a notion of the self which is consistent with a degree of freedom, it is surprising how many other questions find generalized answers.

Mr. Birnbaum graciously concludes his discussion:

If American religion is at present more of an attempt to repress anxieties than to face them, the basic anxiety remains. It is the anxiety of existence itself, which haunts those with two automobiles as well as those who walk. In the meantime, Europeans would do well to waste no time looking down on the Americans. What most Europeans want, after all, is an American standard of living. And when it arrives, it may bring to the Old World some of the spiritual dilemmas of the new.

The interesting thing in this final paragraph is Mr. Birnbaum's reference to "the anxiety of existence itself." This seems a fundamental discovery. For ages men have assumed that their troubles could be eliminated by changing circumstances, or gaining particular goals. But the idea of "the anxiety of existence itself" turns the problem into an inner, psychological issue, which has, it may be, only a philosophical resolution.

From the viewpoint of the restless longings of human nature, this idea of the self is an incomprehensible paradox. Even the logic of finite achievements, of ends and means, breaks down before this proposition. Yet a point may be reached in human life when the entire world and its works also become incomprehensible without this conception of the self. When the palace is seen as the ruin it must one day become, when the pulse of passion is overtaken by the sadness of satiety at the beginning of each longing, the man has entered the vestibule of his universal being and suffers the portents of an eternal life.

Then begins the dialogue of the *Bhagavad-Gita* for him, and never again can he lose himself completely in the Lethe of forgetfulness. It is time for him to begin to think of his death as a man of ambition, and his rebirth as a Promethean spirit.

Yet this rebirth is not an entry to a life of quietist passivity. All nature's processes are resumed, but now without the pressures of the egocentric predicament. The man begins to live life for life's sake, and not in order to extract from it a special honey of existence for himself.

A rather remarkable book on the subject of this sort of awakening is *Zen in the Art of Archery*, by Eugen Herrigel (Pantheon, 1953). This work offers an Eastern parallel of the art of the alchemist, showing how the quest of the mystic may be represented in the practical disciplines of daily life, and how the mysteries of self-knowledge, when studied in this way, permit the presence of an incommensurable factor in every human act. By this means the aspirant breaks out of the limitations of a highly specialized form of action, even while submitting to the most exacting discipline.

The interesting thing about the present moment of Western history is that it seems a time when this view of the role of man may be increasingly adopted with much less cause from religious invitation than in past ages. What was peculiarly a *religious* content of ancient thought now has more the appearance of a psychological verity, although this may mean that religion, also, is changing, and that the forces which lead us in this direction are no longer revelatory in origin, but spring from our own growing understanding of both experience and ourselves.

CHILDREN—(Continued)

beautiful, healthful environment in the uplands of south India, among the hills of the Mysore plateau, not far from Bangalore, nearly 3000 feet above sea-level. Starting with only seven pupils in 1950, the school now has 125 on its roll, boys and girls between six and 16 years of age. The staff numbers nearly 20 teachers, many of whom have taken up work at Rishi Valley either honorarily or on a subsistence allowance, because they are keenly interested in the experiment. The school is entirely residential, being ten miles even from the nearest small town; the children live in groups of about fifteen in each House, like large families, with one or more of the teachers living with them as "Housemasters" or "House-mothers." It is an almost self-sufficient community, having its own farm, on which most of the food is grown, and its own dairy.

Academically the school follows a curriculum not very different from the usual Secondary course of Indian schools; but considerably more time is provided for non-academic activities, such as arts, crafts, music, dancing, hobbies, outdoor occupations, and games. Seniors are helped to prepare for university entrance and other public examinations. But the difference lies in the attitude towards these, and in the method of preparing for them. The aim in view is to help the child to be free from fear, and to grow in intelligence, as far as possible without coercion; therefore the usual methods involving competition, marks, rewards, punishments, and the stimulation of ambition, are avoided. Instead of endeavoring to make the children develop habits of study by regimenting them, the aim is to create an environment in which studies, along with all other activities useful to human growth, are made interesting, so that the child gladly takes part in them. If he or she does not do so, there is no punishment—but the first concern of the teachers is to find out the causes of the lack of interest, and to remove them if possible.

Although the school has been in existence for only six years (out of which the first three years can hardly be counted, as they were a period of sheer struggle for survival), there are already clear indications that the experiment is bearing good fruit. Nearly everyone who has visited Rishi Valley has been impressed by its atmosphere of happiness and peace—the happiness of fearlessness conjoined with consideration for others, not of irresponsibility—and the peace of freedom from frustration, not of suppression. Moreover, even in the academic sphere it has been found that children educated in this atmosphere (provided they have joined the school at an early enough age, before they have been elsewhere too deeply conditioned by fear) naturally develop an interest in studies at the age of about 13 or 14, without any need of external compulsion, are able in a few years to make progress which under coercive methods they would have taken four or five years to make. Inevitably, of course, there have been exceptions and occasional "failures"; and part of the experiment at Rishi Valley is to discover why and how such exceptions arise, and how to make them as few as possible.

One of the greatest difficulties to be faced in such an experiment is that the pace of modern life makes all of us inclined to demand visible results quickly. If we are parents, we want to see our children prepared as quickly as possible for a "successful" career. If we are teachers, we know that our work will be judged by its immediately visible results, even though those may not necessarily be the most valuable to the individual or to the community.

There is no solution to this problem, except that if quick results on a vast scale are demanded, there is no way except that of regimentation, which is the way of ruthlessness, the

Reminder

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way of fear. If we are prepared to face the inevitable results of ruthlessness and fear, in the shape of a totalitarian society, then let us proceed along the way that most of us are at present following. But, if we desire a happier and more peaceful future for the human race, *we must help the individual to discover the secret of peace and happiness*—and that cannot be done on a mass scale. This may involve the postponement of some of our grandiose schemes of mass education: to some people it may seem to be putting back the clock of "progress" (whatever "progress" may mean). But it may result in a rediscovery of some of the truths which were known to India's greatest teachers, and which have been forgotten in our hurry to achieve "greatness" of the modern variety. And that may prove of more lasting value to mankind, in the long run.

F. G. PEARCE

The Rishi Valley School, Chittoor District,
Andhra, South India

REVIEW—(Continued)

Anshen's synthesizing remarks. Dr. Anshen explains that "our authors deal with the increasing realization that spirit and nature are not separate and apart; that intuition and reason must regain their importance as the means of perceiving and fusing inner being with outer reality." And as with Mr. Mumford, Dr. Anshen's concluding paragraph contains a quality of inspiration:

Man has now reached the last extremity of denigration. He yearns to consecrate himself. And so, among the spiritual and moral ruins of the West and of the East renaissance is prepared beyond the limits of nihilism, darkness and despair. In the depths of the Western and Eastern night, civilization with its many faces turning toward its source may rekindle its light in an imminent new dawn—even as in the last book of Revelation which speaks of a Second Coming with a new heaven, a new earth and a new religious quality of life.

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away . . .

In spite of the infinite obligations of men, and in spite of their finite power, in spite of the intransigence of nationalisms, and in spite of spiritual bereavement and moral amnesia, beneath the apparent turmoil and upheaval of the present, and out of the transformations of this dynamic period with the unfolding of a world-consciousness, the purpose of World Perspectives is to help quicken the "unshaken heart of well rounded truth" and interpret the significant elements of the World Age now taking shape out of the core of that undimmed continuity of the creative process which restores man to mankind, while deepening and enhancing his communion with the universe.

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